

# **Warren County Sheriff's Office**

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## **Emergency 911 Communication Center**



## **Communication Procedures & Guidelines**

**for**

## **Emergency Services Providers**

**January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007**

## **Purpose and Content**

These guidelines shall provide a plan and directive for uniform procedures in radio communications for all law enforcement, fire and EMS agencies accessing the Warren County Sheriff's Communication Systems. It should be understood that all frequencies are licensed by the FCC to the Sheriff of Warren County and he retains ultimate authority over their use. As it becomes necessary, sections will be added to cover other areas, including the operation of local base stations, monitor/pager receivers, mobile radios and portable radios.

Providing specific guidelines for radio communications within our organizations will allow for clear and concise communication between Communication Center staff and all emergency services personnel.

Mobile and portable radio equipment is likely the most valuable technological advancement in the fire service since the invention of the pump, but it can be rendered useless if not properly used. In addition to the basic functions of alerting and dispatching alarms, the radio is used to provide a working knowledge of all field conditions, making interaction between the Communication Center and field personnel operating over a wide area possible. Fire ground communications, operating on designated radio frequencies separate from alert and dispatch frequencies, is a major innovation for the efficient overall command and operation of an emergency situation. We have come full circle from the days of the fire trumpet, which to this day is the symbol of fire officer command and rank.

We no longer use "10" Codes but rather plain language to exchange messages. The proper use of the radio is one of the more important adjustments necessary for the modern fire service. It is imperative for field personnel to remain calm and poised in the face of disaster in order to promote an atmosphere of control and stability.

This manual has been prepared to instruct and guide field personnel in the professional and appropriate use of the Warren County Emergency Communication System. It is through the cooperation of the Sheriff of Warren County, the Warren County Fire Coordinator, the Warren County EMS Coordinator and the Communication Center staff that this guide was made possible.

## **The 911 Emergency Communication Center**

The primary Warren County 911 Emergency Communication Center is located within the Warren County Public Safety Building at 1400 State Route 9 in Queensbury, NY. There are a minimum of three Communication Officers on duty from 07:00 to 23:00 and a minimum of two Communication Officers on duty from 23:00 to 07:00 every day. The Communication Center includes six identical console positions for those times when additional staffing is needed.

A secondary 911 Emergency Communication Center is located in the basement of the Municipal Center at 1340 State Route 9 in Queensbury, NY. The backup ECC mirrors the primary 911 center and includes four more console positions.

The Communication Center is the primary Public Service Answering Point (PSAP) for all hard line and wireless 911 calls in Warren County and the Town of Minerva. Communication Officers are responsible for the dispatching of 25 fire departments, 14 emergency squads (including Minerva Fire/EMS which is in Essex County) and 3 police departments, covering 11 towns, 1 village and 1 city. They also dispatch for the Lake George Park Commission during the boating season, monitor State Police units operating within the county and fire and EMS units outside the county during mutual aid calls. Warren County has an off-season population of about 65,000 people over 965 square miles. That number can more than double during the summer months and during special events, such as the Adirondack Hot Air Balloon Festival, Americade and the Adirondack Nationals Car Show.

In 2006, the Communication Center handled nearly 30,110 calls for service or roughly 82 calls per day. This number represents any incident that a police, fire or EMS response was needed. It does not take into consideration duplicate reports for the same incident or calls answered on the "administrative" lines that are directed to another division or agency.

Currently, there are 17 full-time Communication Officers, two Senior Communication Officers and one Communication Supervisor. All Officers are required to successfully pass a civil service exam and must successfully pass a 16-week on-the-job training course. Once this is done, he/she will go on to become certified in Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD), CPR/AED, NYSPIN and e-JusticeNY operations. Meal breaks are taken within the Communications Center. Stress levels are often high and "quiet" time is minimal.

All activities of the Communication Center are time sensitive. The time setting on **all** equipment is synchronized using Spectracom's GPS satellite based NetClock system. To avoid any confusion, all times are logged using 24-hour military time.

0100 = 1:00 am	1300 = 1:00 pm
0200 = 2:00 am	1400 = 2:00 pm
0300 = 3:00 am	1500 = 3:00 pm
0400 = 4:00 am	1600 = 4:00 pm
0500 = 5:00 am	1700 = 5:00 pm
0600 = 6:00 am	1800 = 6:00 pm
0700 = 7:00 am	1900 = 7:00 pm
0800 = 8:00 am	2000 = 8:00 pm
0900 = 9:00 am	2100 = 9:00 pm
1000 = 10:00 am	2200 = 10:00 pm
1100 = 11:00 am	2300 = 11:00 pm
1200 = 12:00 pm	2400 = 12:00 am

The Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system in use today was designed by New World Systems (NWS) in Troy, Michigan. Warren County has been an NWS customer since 1992. In September 2004, the software was updated to their new Microsoft Platform (MSP) product. Not only did this allow the Sheriff's personnel to continue to use a software package that they are very familiar with, it also afforded them the benefit of a "Windows" based, far more user friendly interface than it's AS-400 based predecessor. Once a call for service (CFS) is received, it is imported to the CAD system. Once this is done, and the address is verified against the GEO or street file, a map appears with an icon pointing to the scene of the call. To that the operator can drag-and-drop any available unit, which will then become an active unit on the call. The exact address is displayed, including cross streets, and if set up to do so will suggest the shortest route of travel for field units.

## **FCC Requirements and Radio Regulations**

Efficient communications are essential in today's world. Of all the facilities available, two-way radios are recognized as the most efficient system for keeping all units informed as to the exact conditions that exist at one or more incidents. Preliminary reports and status updates make it possible for officers to deploy their equipment most efficiently. It's value in the management of resources and operations has been well established.

- All radio communications shall comply with regulations of the Federal Communications Commission.
- All conversations shall be as brief as possible and all unnecessary repetition avoided.
- All radio conversations shall be business-like without personal greetings or pleasantries.
- All transmissions shall be courteous, but expressions of courtesy such as "thanks" and "please" shall be avoided in the interest of brevity. Indecent, obscene or profane language is strictly prohibited.
- Members shall use titles when identifying themselves, or addressing others. Avoid abbreviations such as "Cap". Never call a person by their first name no matter how well they are known. Formal procedures are recommended by the FCC for all radio communications.
- If an error has been made, simply say "correction" and reword the message.
- All messages should be acknowledged as quickly as possible. Avoid the use of "OK" except as a qualifying answer as in a properly received test. Otherwise, acknowledge messages with the phrase "Message Received" or simply "Received".

## **Appropriate Radio Procedures**

- It is important when using any radio that you use proper radio procedures. By doing so, chances are good the person you are calling is prepared to hear or “copy” your message and they will receive and understand it completely.
- Be sure to select the proper channel.
- Be sure the volume is turned up.
- Be sure the channel is clear of other radio traffic.
- Always use your complete identifier (“Ambulance 721” not just “721”)
- Do not attempt to contact Fire or EMS Control during a dispatch.
- Press and hold the Push-to-Talk (PTT) button on the microphone for approximately one second before speaking to allow the ANI data packet (squawk tone) to be sent.
- Speak in a normal voice. Shouting or loud talking causes distorted sounds that are difficult to understand. Every effort should be made to keep your voice calm, regardless of the situation. If a person is out of breath, they should pause momentarily and regain their composure prior to transmitting.
- Speak clearly in a natural conversational rhythm.
- Speak at a steady slow to medium pace, do not rush.
- Hold the microphone at a 45 degree angle about 2-3 inches from your mouth and speak across it.
- Try to avoid background noises. Sirens, air horns and other loud noises can seriously impair reception of messages.
- All messages should be clear, concise and to the point.
- Release the PTT button after your message has been transmitted.
- At no time is obscene or vulgar language appropriate.
- Remember, a message has no value if it is not clearly understood.
- Listen for a Communication Officer to acknowledge your message. If, after a short time the Communication Officer has not acknowledged, call and ask if he/she copied your last transmission.

## Phonetic Numbering

To avoid confusion or misunderstanding, numbers should always be transmitted digit by digit. This applies to all numbers, including street numbers. For example:

Address

Transmitted as:

1340 State Route 9  
15 First Street

One, Three, Four, Zero State Route 9  
One, Five First Street

## The Phonetic Alphabet

A – Adam	N - Nancy
B – Boy	O - Ocean
C – Charlie	P - Paul
D – David	Q - Queen
E – Edward	R - Robert
F – Frank	S - Sam
G – George	T - Tom
H – Henry	U - Union
I – Ida	V - Victor
J – John	W - William
K – King	X – X-ray
L – Lincoln	Y - Young
M – Mary	Z - Zebra

Words that are not understood after repetition shall be spelled out, and the word spoken before and after spelling. For example:

"Chelsea -- I spell C H E L S E A -- Chelsea".

If the spelling still cannot be understood, then the phonetic alphabet shall be used to clarify spoken letters. For example:

"Chelsea -- Charles – Henry – Edward – Lincoln – Sam – Edward – Adam".

## **Radio Vocabulary**

Common words and phrases used in radio communications and their meanings.

- **ACKNOWLEDGE** - Let me know if the message was received and understood.
- **AFFIRMATIVE** - Yes or true. Opposite of negative.
- **ALL STATIONS** - Attention all stations - stand by for message.
- **CORRECTION** - Use if any error has been made.
- **EMERGENCY** - Any incident that threatens life and/or property.
- **EXPOSURES** - The surrounding property on all sides of a fire building or fire area. Exposures are defined in clockwise order beginning with "Side 1" which is the street side.
- **FALSE ALARMS**
  - **MALICIOUS FALSE ALARM (MFA)** - An alarm deliberately sounded to cause inconvenience, disturbance, and excitement.
  - **EQUIPMENT** - Malfunction of alarm system equipment.
  - **ACCIDENTAL** - Accidental activation of a fire alarm system.
  - **GOOD INTENT** - Mistaken activation of the fire alarm system by a citizen with good intentions.
- **ICS - INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM**
- **IN SERVICE** - Unit ready and available for another alarm.
- **MESSAGE RECEIVED** - I have received and understood the message.
- **NEGATIVE** - No or not true. Opposite of affirmative.
- **OCCUPANCY** - The purpose for which a building is being used such as a residential dwelling, grocery store, textile factory, storage loft, hotel, rooming house, office building, etc.
- **OCCUPANTS** – Person or persons within a building.
- **OCCUPIED** - People in building at the time of the fire.
- **UNOCCUPIED** – No people in the building at the time of the fire.
- **OUT OF SERVICE** - Not available to respond due to routine or mechanical conditions, or operating on an alarm or drill.



- OVER - I have finished, you may continue.
- PROCEED – Go ahead with your message
- PRIORITY 1 - Emergency response mode using warning lights and siren.
- PRIORITY 2 - Non-emergency response mode. No warning lights or siren.
- REPEAT - Repeat your last message.
- UNIT - The term used to designate any police, fire or EMS vehicle or person.
- EMERGENCY TRAFFIC - Message to follow will be of a life-threatening nature.
- MAYDAY – Message transmitted ONLY when you or your crew are threatened with "grave and imminent danger." This distress call consists of the word "Mayday" repeated three times.
- VACANT - Unused or abandoned building.

## Warren County Emergency Communication System

The Warren County communication system consists of 29 frequencies on VHF High (148-174 MHz), VHF Low (30-50 MHz), and UHF (406-512 MHz) band. All frequencies are licensed by the FCC to the Sheriff of Warren County and he retains ultimate authority over their use. They are a combination of simplex and half-duplex frequencies. A simplex frequency is one that you transmit and receive on the same frequency. A half-duplex frequency is when you transmit on one frequency and receive on another through a "repeater" system. The Sheriff's main frequency (Headquarters), Local Government (DPW) and the Emergency Services Repeater (ESR-1) frequency are half-duplex frequencies on a repeater. This means that all signals from a mobile, portable or base station are transmitted on a specific frequency to a mountain top receiver and at the same time the signal is re-broadcasted (or repeated) at a higher power on another specific frequency to the other units. This is how a unit in Hague can talk directly to a unit in Queensbury or as far away as Albany.

Warren County has four transmitter/receiver sites. The first is at the top of Prospect Mountain in Lake George, NY. The second is at the top of Gore Mountain in Johnsbury, NY. The third is located in the basement of the Warren County Municipal Center in Queensbury, NY. The fourth is located at the Hague Fire Station on State Route 8 in Hague, NY. All inbound and outbound radio and telephone traffic is recorded and archived for a period of 90 days.

Certain channels at these four sites are connected to a "voting" system. This technology automatically takes the strongest signal from the four sites and hands it off to the Communication Officer without their interaction. By doing so, the Communication Center is will only hear the strongest signal. In reverse, the operator can manually "steer" their transmissions back out based on the tower that received the strongest incoming signal.

The **Fire Alert frequency** (WNVU-964 - 154.175 MHz) is used for paging all Warren County Fire Departments, Emergency Squads, Fire and EMS Coordinators and off duty Communications personnel. Transmissions on this frequency other than those from the Warren County Communication Center or a Warren County Fire/EMS base for a local announcement are strictly prohibited.

The **Fire Control frequency** (KCK-671 - 33.90 MHz) is used by all Warren County fire apparatus to advise Fire Control of their status. It is also used by the Communications Center to activate the siren or air horn warning system at each fire station. Non-essential traffic on this frequency is strictly prohibited.

The **Inter-County Fire Control** frequency (KCK-671 - 45.88 MHz) is used as a means of communication between Fire Control Centers throughout New York State.

The **Civil Defense** frequency (KYQ-352 - 45.56 MHz) is a state-wide frequency used by the State Emergency Management Office (SEMO) and the Office of Disaster Preparedness for coordinating resources during large scale disasters or weather related emergencies.

The **EMS Control** frequency (WNVU-964 - 155.295 MHz) is used by all Warren County EMS apparatus to advise EMS Control of their status.

The **Emergency Services Repeater** or ESR-1 (WQCK-301 – 151.025) is a repeater frequency. The frequency is available for use by all authorized Warren County fire & EMS personnel.

The Communication Center also has a Motorola CDM-1250 portable base station and a Zetron series 2500 encoder set up to act as a local backup radio with paging capabilities. It is tied in to the consoles as well as the recording system and includes many of the local fire/EMS channels, such as Warren County Fireground, Fire Police, Queensbury Central Fire, West Glens Falls Fire and EMS, Bay Ridge Fire and EMS, North Queensbury Fire and EMS, South Queensbury Fire, Queensbury DPW and several others. For years, Queensbury Central and the Glens Falls Fire were dispatched on their own frequencies. In the early 1990's it was decided the dispatching of all Warren County Fire and EMS agencies would take place on the Warren County Fire Alert frequency.

The **Sheriff's Primary** law enforcement frequency (KNED-338 - 154.725 MHz) is used by "Headquarters" to poll for the location of patrols, dispatch patrols to calls for service and for the patrol units to advise Headquarters of their status. This too is a "repeated" frequency allowing patrol units to talk to each other even though they are at opposite ends of the county.

The **Sheriff's Secondary** frequency (KSL-462 - 159.090 MHz) is commonly referred to as the "Dispatch" frequency. It is used by Warren County patrol units, marine patrol units and Lake George Park Commission marine units for Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) information. Wants and warrant checks on a person, driver's license checks, and vehicle and boat registration checks are a few examples. This is a simplex frequency that is incorporated into the "voting receiver".

The **Sheriff's Car to Car** frequency (KD-43629 - 154.950 MHz) is, as the name implies, used when two patrol units need to communicate with each other. This channel allows them to do so without tying up the main or dispatch frequency.

In addition to these three police frequencies, Communication Officers also have the **Intra-State** frequency (WNAK-422 - 155.370 MHz), sometimes referred to as the "MRD" or Mobile Radio District to contact other police agencies throughout New York State.

The **Local Government** frequency (KCZ-460 - 154.980 MHz) is used primarily by the Warren County Department of Public Works (DPW). Any highway department in Warren County may use the frequency although most use their own.

The **Transport** frequency (KNED-338 – 159.1575) is used strictly by the Correctional Division inmate transport vehicles.

## **What to expect from Fire/EMS Control and the Communication Officers**

The Warren County Emergency Communication Center and its staff are here for you.

- They assist in pinpointing call locations.
- They assist in the relay of emergency messages between emergency services personnel.
- They maintain accurate and detailed records of all pertinent information relating to each call for service.
- They are certified in Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) which allows them to assign a priority to every EMS call based on a standardized set of questions.
- They provide pre-arrival instructions to callers.
- They provide post-dispatch instructions to responding emergency personnel.
- They coordinate emergency notifications to wrecker services, utilities such as National Grid, Time Warner and Verizon as well as Animal Control, Department of Public Works, NY State Department of Transportation and Poison Control and Chem-Trec.
- At 19:00 hours Monday through Friday, they perform weekly scheduled siren and unit tests of each agency in the county.
- At 18:00 hours each evening, they provide nightly announcements for training and other **public safety related** topics, as long as:
  - They meet the criteria established and agreed upon by the Warren County Sheriff and the Warren County Fire Coordinator.
  - They do not violate Regulation 90.405 of the Federal Communications Commission.
  - They do not interfere with emergency operations.
- Announcements may be approved by one of the following:
  - Sheriff, Undersheriff or Communications Supervisor
  - Fire Coordinator or EMS Coordinator
  - Fire Chief or Executive Officer
  - Squad Captain or Executive Officer

- Training announcements may be made on any 2 nights. In addition, an announcement for training may be made the night immediately prior to the training date.
- Announcements for monthly meetings **will not** be made.
- Announcements are limited to no more than 30 words, excluding the required language in the Communication Operations manual. Announcements of a greater length **require** the Sheriff's or Undersheriff's approval.
- Announcements, other than for training, will be run a **maximum** of two times on dates to be selected by the authority.
- Announcement requests must be received at least 30 minutes prior to the time of the announcement.
- An announcement canceling a training course due to unforeseen circumstances may be made the night prior to **or** the night of the training course.
- With the exception of the Sheriff, authority name and title are NOT transmitted with announcements.
- There are **NO** exceptions to the above rules. Any request for announcements to be made outside the procedure outlined herein must be made to and approved by the Sheriff.
- The Communication Center **is not** a personal answering service, and will not accept personal calls or take messages.

## Basic Dispatching Procedures for Fire Related Calls for Service

The following procedure will be followed by Communication Officers when dispatching a fire related emergency call for service. On the Fire Alert channel:

1. Activate the pulsed Alert Tone for several seconds
  2. "Stand-by (Agency Name) Fire"
  3. Activate Two-Tone sequence for pager activation
  4. "Warren County Fire Control to (Agency Name) Fire, respond to (Address and Cross Streets) for a (description of the incident)."
  5. Repeat steps 3 and 4
  6. Fire Control will end the dispatch with the time
  7. On Fire Control, a two-tone sequence will activate the station siren
  8. The Communication Officer will continue steps 3, 4 and 7 every three minutes until the necessary resources respond.
- Field units shall use the term "Fire Control" to contact the Communication Center.
  - Communication Officers will "echo" and simulcast all incoming pertinent transmissions made by field units.
  - Field units should always wait for the operator to finish both dispatch sequences before trying to contact Fire Control.
  - Field units should know what unit they are in and what unit they are attempting to contact **prior** to transmitting.
  - If multiple units are responding to the same call at the same time, the first unit should be the only one to contact Fire Control to advise which units are responding.
  - Field units should use the Warren County Fireground frequency or their organization's own frequency to obtain additional information, receive orders from the Incident Commander and all other **on scene** communications. For inter-agency communication where units are not within range of each other, the ESR-1 (repeater) frequency may be used.
  - It is not necessary for apparatus to acknowledge an alarm and say you are "awaiting manpower". Either you are responding to the alarm or you are not.
  - Generally speaking, a field unit should only need to contact Fire Control to let them know they are "Enroute" or "Responding", "Arriving" if you are the first unit to arrive on the scene (don't forget to give a brief status report) and "In Service" if you are the last unit from you agency and want to put all units in service.
  - For example, use the Fire Control (33.90 MHz) frequency to advise the Communication Center that you are responding in the following manner:

1. "(Your complete unit number) to Fire Control."
  2. Wait for an acknowledgement
  3. "(Your complete unit number) is responding."
  4. Fire Control will simultaneously re-broadcast (known as simulcasting) your message on the Fire Alert, Fire Control and EMS Control frequencies.
- If you are the first unit to arrive on the scene of the call, provide Fire Control with an "on scene" report in the following manner:
    1. "(Your complete unit number) to Fire Control."
    2. Wait for an acknowledgement
    3. "(Your complete unit number) is arriving, nothing showing – Investigating." Other on scene reports might be "smoke showing", "working fire" or "fully involved."
    4. Fire Control will simulcast your message on the Fire Alert, Fire Control and EMS Control frequencies.
  - If you are the first unit to arrive on the scene of the call and have no radio communication, give Fire Control an "on scene" report by phone by dialing 911.
  - It is not necessary for more than one Chief to check enroute.
  - It is not necessary for each unit to check out on the scene.
  - It is not necessary for fire units to check in "Returning". If the unit is in district and available for the next call, the unit is considered "In Service".
  - It is not necessary for any unit to check in "Mobile Service".
  - If no **unit** has responded within six (6) minutes of the time of call, the call will be dispatched to the nearest mutual aid agency and the Fire Coordinator notified. If no **apparatus** has responded within six (6) minutes of the time of call, Fire Control may attempt to contact an Officer for instructions.
  - If another agency has been dispatched under mutual aid and the home agency obtains sufficient personnel to handle the call, the home agency has the option to cancel any/all mutual aid units.
  - All on scene operations should be conducted in accordance with the Incident Command System (ICS).
  - On Sunday evenings at 18:00, the Communication Center will conduct a weekly test of the Fire Chief's and EMS Captain's page, followed by the list of units out of service throughout the County.

## Basic Dispatching Procedures for EMS Related Calls for Service

The following procedure will be followed by Communication Officers when dispatching EMS related emergency call for service. On the Fire Alert channel:

1. Activate the pulsed Alert Tone for several seconds
  2. "Stand-by (Agency Name) Emergency"
  3. Two-Tone sequence for pager activation
  4. "Warren County Fire Control to (Agency Name) Emergency, respond (EMD Priority) to (Address and Cross Streets) for a (description of the incident)."
  5. Repeat steps 3 and 4
  6. Fire Control will end the announcement with the time.
  7. The Communication Officer will continue steps 3 and 4 every three minutes until the necessary resources respond.
- Field units shall use the term "EMS Control" to contact the Communication Center.
  - Communication Officers will "echo" and simulcast all incoming pertinent transmissions made by field units.
  - When an ambulance checks "Enroute" to a call, Communications will presume that they have all the resources they need. Requests for ALS or additional personnel should be made at that time.
  - Field units should always wait for the operator to finish both dispatch sequences before trying to contact EMS Control.
  - Field Units should know what unit they are in and what unit they are attempting to contact **prior** to transmitting.
  - If multiple units are responding to the same call at the same time, the first unit should be the only one to contact EMS Control to advise which units are responding.
  - Field units should contact each other on the statewide inter-agency EMS frequency (155.715) or their organization's own frequency to obtain additional information, receive orders from the Incident Commander and all other **on scene** communications. For inter-agency communications where units are not within range of each other, the ESR-1 (repeater) frequency may be used.
  - It is not necessary for apparatus to advise EMS Control that you will be "enroute momentarily". Either you are responding to the call or you are not.
  - Generally speaking, you should only need to contact EMS Control to let them know you are "Enroute" or "Responding", "Arriving", "Enroute to (facility name)", "Out at (facility name)", "Returning" and "In Service".



- For example use the EMS Control (155.295 MHz) frequency to advise the Communication Center that you are responding in the following manner:
  1. “(Your complete unit number) to EMS Control.”
  2. Wait for an acknowledgement
  3. “(Your complete unit number) is responding.”
  4. EMS Control will simulcast your message on the Fire Alert, Fire Control and EMS Control frequencies.

When you arrive on the scene, advise EMS Control in the following manner:

1. “(Your complete unit number) to EMS Control.”
2. Wait for an acknowledgement
3. “(Your complete unit number) is arriving.”
4. EMS Control will simul-cast your message on the Fire Alert, Fire Control and EMS Control frequencies.

If you are the first unit to arrive on the scene of the call and the situation justifies it, provide EMS Control with an “on scene” report in the following manner:

5. “(Your complete unit number) to EMS Control.”
  6. Wait for an acknowledgement
  7. “(Your complete unit number) is arriving, two vehicles, head-on, vehicles are still in the roadway, 3 patients, no extrication needed.” Other on scene reports might be “Unable to locate – request further information” or “smoke showing from the vehicle.”
  8. EMS Control will simul-cast your message on the Fire Alert, Fire Control and EMS Control frequencies.
- If no ambulance has acknowledged the call within **six (6) minutes** of the original time of call, the call will be dispatched to the nearest mutual aid agency along with Empire Ambulance Service.
  - If another agency has been dispatched under mutual aid and the home agency obtains sufficient personnel to handle the call, the home agency has the option to cancel any/all mutual aid units. However, the State Department of Health mandates the closest fully staffed ambulance continue to the scene.
  - All on scene operations should be conducted in accordance with the Incident Command System (ICS).
  - On Sunday evenings at 18:00, the Communication Center will conduct a weekly test of the Fire Chief’s and EMS Captain’s page, followed by the list of units out of service throughout the County.

- The Communication Center has an established Automatic Mutual Aid (AMA) EMS policy.
  - As the county Emergency Communication Center we have an obligation to ensure patient care is the principle standard upon which ambulance assignments are made. As stated within NYS Department of Health Policy Statement 95-04, the intent of EMS responses is to have "the closest available EMS unit respond to a patient's medical need." Patient care must take priority over any other concern. And, closest available must be interpreted to mean fully manned and ready to immediately respond to the call.
  - Any EMS agency that notifies our office they are available and closest to a call, shall be immediately acknowledged as enroute.
  - The primary agency is the emergency squad with immediate jurisdiction over the geographical location in which the request for services has been made. Any other service available to handle the call in the primary jurisdiction is referred to as a secondary agency.
  - Each primary agency has at least one secondary backup response agency for their jurisdiction. In addition, Empire Ambulance Service holds an operating certificate valid for all municipalities in Warren County and, with the exception of the City of Glens Falls, is a secondary agency for all of those municipalities.
  - There are three means by which mutual aid can be activated:
    - Discretionary Activation - The primary agency may request the activation at any time.
    - Automatic Activation Based on Alerting Time - The primary agency has not responded to the call for service within the first 6 minutes of alerting and has not cancelled mutual aid activation.
    - Mandatory Immediate Activation - The primary agency has failed to respond to a previous call for service. Note this does not apply if an EMS agency has their primary crew out on a call and are unable to respond to a second call in their jurisdiction.
  - A designated member or officer of the primary agency involved may deactivate mutual aid upon request to the Emergency Communication Center.
  - If no agency is assigned to the call after 6 minutes, and no person from the home agency has cancelled mutual aid, the Communication Center will activate secondary agencies as outlined on the map in the Communication Center. Note for this first activation of secondary

agencies will include an alert to Empire Ambulance Service. The Communication Center will continue to alert both the primary agency and the secondary agencies until the call is handled. Note for these additional pages that Empire Ambulance Service is no longer included.

- If no agency is assigned to the call **after 12 minutes** of the first request, and no person from the home squad has cancelled the mutual aid, The Communication Center will activate tones for any EMS agency that may be available to handle the call as outlined on the map in the Communication Center, and advise the Shift Commander.
- If a secondary agency acknowledges and is assigned the call, and is not physically in the jurisdiction of the township of the primary agency, the primary agency and any other secondary agencies shall continue to be alerted every 3 minutes until such time as the assigned secondary agency has notified the Communication Center that they are in the township of the call, or the call is re-assigned to a closer available agency. Upon such notification, all further alerting for the call shall be terminated.
- Between the hours of 11 p.m. and 7 a.m. (the A-line), for the purposes of activating mutual aid, the county shall be divided into two EMS zones - north and south. The southern zone includes the city of Glens Falls and the towns of Queensbury, Lake George, Lake Luzerne and Stony Creek. The northern zone includes the towns of Thurman, Johnsburg, Warrensburg, Bolton, Chester, Horicon and Hague. When activating mutual aid, the Communication Center will first contact Empire Ambulance and ask them for their location.
  - If Empire's location is in the zone where the call is located, tone only the home agency and Empire Ambulance Service. As soon as the home agency or Empire is manned, enroute, and in the township of the call, all further alerting for the call shall be terminated.
  - If Empire's location is not in the zone where the call is located, tone the home agency, Empire Ambulance Service, and the regular secondary agencies used on the day and evening shifts. As soon as the home agency, Empire, or any secondary agency is manned, enroute, and in the township of the call, all further alerting for the call shall be terminated.

## **Making Requests for Additional Equipment or Personnel**

- All requests for additional resources should come from the Incident Commander or person in charge at the scene.
- The Incident Commander should make the request using a mobile radio, **not a portable**.
- In accordance with NYS law, a patrol unit is sent to **ALL** motor vehicle accidents. It is not necessary to specifically request one.
- If a police officer has not been assigned to the call and one is needed, one may be requested. Be prepared to describe the problem or justify the request.
- In the event of an obvious death, whenever possible, it is suggested you contact the Communication Center by phone to explain the circumstances. Exceptions would be a death as a result of a motor vehicle accident.
- Be aware that what started out as a fire or EMS call could easily become a crime scene, such as a suicide or an assault.
- In the event of a fire or EMS call at the scene of a potential crime scene or hazardous situation, you may be asked to stand-by "near" the scene until it is secured by law enforcement personnel. Not doing so may place your personnel in danger as well as that of the responding officers.

## **Portable Radios**

Portable radios, though convenient, are best used for on scene communications. With a maximum output power of 5 watts, they are not well suited for communications with base stations. Mobile radios range from 25 to 110 watts. If you attempt to contact the Communication Center on a portable and you are unreadable, do not keep trying, switch to a mobile radio or change your location.

## **ALS Intercepts**

If you make a request for an ALS Tech or an ALS intercept from another squad, you should thereafter switch to the statewide inter-agency EMS frequency (155.715 MHz) or the ESR-1 repeater for all further communication between your unit and the ALS Tech.

## **Contacts**

If you have any questions or would like to make arrangements for a presentation or tour of the Communications Center, please contact your Fire or EMS Coordinator or one of the following:

Shane L. Ross, Undersheriff <a href="mailto:Shane.Ross@Sheriff.Co.Warren.NY.US">Shane.Ross@Sheriff.Co.Warren.NY.US</a>	743 2500 (Option 9) 8AM-4PM
Larry Jeffords, Communication Supervisor <a href="mailto:Larry.Jeffords@Sheriff.Co.Warren.NY.US">Larry.Jeffords@Sheriff.Co.Warren.NY.US</a>	743-2504 7AM-3PM
W. Marc Zahn, Senior Communication Officer <a href="mailto:Marc.Zahn@Sheriff.Co.Warren.NY.US">Marc.Zahn@Sheriff.Co.Warren.NY.US</a>	743-2500 (Option 1) 7AM-3PM
Brian Engle, Senior Communication Officer <a href="mailto:Brian.Engle@Sheriff.Co.Warren.NY.US">Brian.Engle@Sheriff.Co.Warren.NY.US</a>	743-2500 (Option 1) 3PM-11PM